



# Ancient fort, medieval castle, picturesque ruin

## *Seann dùn, caisteal bho na meadhan linntean, tobhta brèagha*

Pronounced: Shan doon, cashteal von a mean leentean, towta-breea

Not far from here are the impressive remains of the once-mighty Urquhart Castle. Surrounded by water on three sides, with extensive views up and down Loch Ness, this was a place which gave its occupiers great power over the strategic Great Glen route from west to east.

The castle dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century when Sir Alan Durward, whose family had been granted the lordship of Urquhart by King Alexander II, set about building a powerful stronghold. From here, he could control the surrounding area for the king. Although the initial threat from the kings of Norway (whose lands extended to only a few miles from here) had disappeared by 1266, the castle was to be besieged and captured many times by different armies over the following centuries.

Even before the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the site had been important. The Picts Cruithnich, who left traces of their presence around here (carved stones, jewellery, burial grounds and place names), had a fort at Urquhart, which St Columba Calum Cille may have visited in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century.

Nowadays, the castle is a major tourist attraction. Visitors can explore its fascinating ruins, find out about its stormy history, enjoy its spectacular views and ponder the many mysteries of Loch Ness Loch Nis. Why not do the same? It's an easy walk from here and well worth a visit. (Please see map on other side for details.)

*“The famous castel of Urquhart: of quhilk the rewinous wallis remains yet in great admiration of pepill.”*

(Hector Boece, *Principal of Aberdeen University*, 1527)



**580 AD**  
St Columba visits



**1230 AD**  
First castle built



**1296 AD**  
Edward I of England seizes the castle



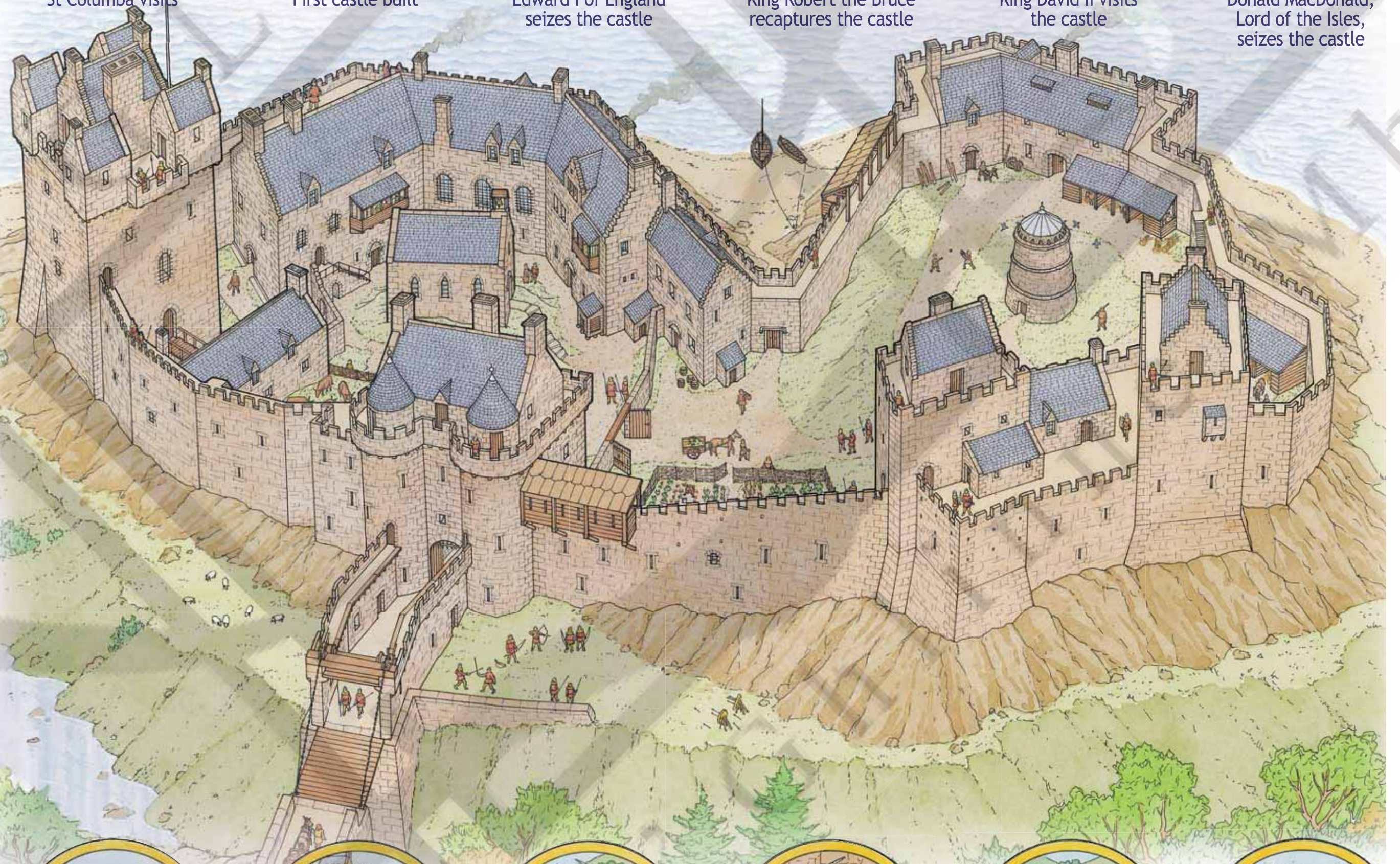
**1308 AD**  
King Robert the Bruce recaptures the castle



**1342 AD**  
King David II visits the castle



**1395 AD**  
Donald MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, seizes the castle



**1509 AD**  
The castle gifted to Sir John Grant of Freuchie



**1513 AD**  
Donald MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, seizes back the castle



**1545 AD**  
The MacDonalds of Glengarry and Camerons of Locheil raid the castle



**1644 AD**  
The castle raided by Covenanters



**1689 AD**  
Jacobites besiege the castle



**1690 AD**  
The defending garrison leaves, blowing up parts of the castle to stop it being held by the enemy in the future.